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New York

President:	Mr. Adom	(Côte d'Ivoire)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Gebru
	France	Mrs. Gasri
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kuzmin
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

Letter dated 15 November 2018 from the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/1031)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to take this opportunity to pay sincere tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Ma Zhaoxu, Permanent Representative of China, for his service as President of the Council for the month of November. I am sure that I speak for all the members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Ma and his team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

Letter dated 15 November 2018 from the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/1031)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2379 (2017), to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/1031, which contains a letter dated 15 November 2018 from the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant addressed to the President of the Security Council

I now give the floor to Mr. Khan.

Mr. Khan: It is indeed a singular honour and a privilege to present the first report of the United Nations investigative team to promote accountability for crimes allegedly committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as Da'esh (see S/2018/1031). We intend to outline today our initial strategic vision, the progress made to date in its realization and our key priorities as we now continue our preparatory work in Iraq ahead of the commencement of more meaningful and substantive investigative work early next year.

I would like, however, to begin with the obvious, but something that requires us all, in my respectful submission, to have pause for thought. It is to applaud the indefatigable courage and perseverance and recognize the tremendous suffering of the survivors of Da'esh crimes. Their fortitude in standing firm and continuing is an aspect that must be recognized and be at the forefront of our minds. In that endeavour, of course, the unity and united perseverance of the people of Iraq in defeating ISIL territorially are an aspect that must be mentioned.

As ISIL has been driven from its strongholds, the scope and magnitude of its heinous acts have become tragically ever more clear. Witness testimony after witness testimony has revealed unimaginable abuses and acts of depravity. Thousands of our fellow human beings — men and thousands upon thousands of women and children — have become victims at the hands of ISIL and witnesses to its deeds. By dint of resolution 2379 (2017), the Security Council responded unanimously with one clear voice to the call of assistance, which had been raised by the Government of the Republic of Iraq in support of its efforts to hold ISIL accountable.

Noting that the terrorist acts of ISIL constituted a threat to international peace and security, the Council requested the establishment of the Investigative Team in order to support domestic efforts to establish accountability, requiring us to collect, gather, analyse and store evidence in Iraq of crimes that may constitute genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. In addition, the Council underlined that, as Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team, I would be required to promote throughout the world accountability for the crimes of Da'esh and work with survivors in a manner consistent with now well-established human rights norms and best United Nations practices. That was for one imperative and one purpose —to ensure that those crimes are recognized within the disciplined environment of the law. That aspect is discussed in further detail in our report (see S/2018/1031), dated 16 November.

Turning to the next topic of this briefing, I take this opportunity to express gratitude to the Council and the Government of Iraq for the significant trust that they have reposed in the Investigative Team in that important mandate and to reiterate what should be obvious, which is our absolute commitment to showing fidelity to the mandate and resolution 2379 (2017) in a bid to ensure that those have committed those acts are investigated and pursued in accordance with best United Nations practices and international law so that we can deliver on our mandate.

Since the formal commencement of its activities on 20 August, the Investigative Team has undertaken key preparatory work, pursuant to the mandate provided by the Council, in order to provide what we hope will prove to be a solid platform for the commencement of investigative activities early next year. As a result of those efforts and based on the support of key partners within the United Nations system, including — it must be recognized — the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Field Support, as well as the unstinting support of the Office of Legal Affairs, the Investigative Team successfully deployed to Iraq on 29 October.

In conducting the preparatory activities outlined in our first report, we have been guided at all times by two key imperatives. First, the Team must operate as an independent, impartial and credible accountability mechanism capable of conducting all its work to the highest possible standards. Secondly, there is a need to ensure that our work is carried out collaboratively and cooperatively with the Government of Iraq, with full respect at all times for national sovereignty and in a manner that effectively harnesses the talents and engenders the support of all elements of Iraqi society.

As reflected in resolution 2379 (2017) and the terms of reference for the activities of the Investigative Team (S/2018/118, annex), approved by the Council in February, those imperatives are not paradoxical, nor do they represent opposing weights of a scale to be delicately balanced. On the contrary, the establishment of the Team as an independent, impartial entity, and successful and meaningful engagement with the Government of Iraq and the broader populace of Iraq in its work represent, in our view, mutually reinforcing principles that, if harnessed effectively, will allow the Team to overcome the many challenges, it will face and deliver effectively on the mandate set down by the Council.

With a view to ensuring that the Investigative Team can conduct its work in an independent and impartial manner, in line with the international standards to which I alluded a moment ago, we have sought, during the first three months of our activities, to prioritize the development of core logistical, substantive and administrative frameworks, which have been reflected in the proposed budget of the Investigative Team currently under the consideration of the General Assembly.

With respect to the first aspect — our logistical arrangements — we have identified former United Nations facilities for refurbishment that will serve as our headquarters and permanent premises in Baghdad, and plans have also been developed regarding the physical and technological infrastructure that will be needed to support the material and evidence that we will receive and gather, as well. That will, we hope, ensure the effective storage of documentary, forensic and digital information, which would be the foundation of any proper investigation in accordance with international standards.

Secondly, with regard to the substantive framework, progress has also been made. Work has commenced on the development of various standing operating procedures of key activities, including the collection, preservation and storing of evidence and material, as well as information management and chains of custody. Those issues will be critical to witness protection. Initial mapping activities have already been undertaken, assisting us in identifying where key sources of existing evidentiary material may be located.

We have also spent a significant amount of time in ensuring that the admonition and injunction of the Council to avoid duplication are fully observed, and that has taken the form of reaching out to other parts of the United Nations, whether in the counter-terrorism sphere or other areas, such as the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, to ensure that we harness the capacities, the experience and the centres of excellence that are already present. All of that is to ensure that the Team operates as effectively and efficiently as possible and discharges its mandate.

Thirdly, with regard to the composition of the Investigative Team, requirements have been identified with respect to both international staff and national personnel, and the initial recruitment is progressing. In that regard, I wish to emphasize to the Council that I

am firmly of the view that the successful integration of Iraqi national professional personnel into the Team will be essential. It will enrich our capacities, allow us to operate more effectively in Iraq and, we hope, more fully and completely fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Council.

At all times, Organizationur objective will be to foster a mutually supportive relationship between international and national staff and mould it into one coherent, cohesive and unified entity, united by a common principle to investigate, in accordance with the best United Nations standards and international practices, acts that may have been committed by ISIL. In doing so, it is our fervent hope that we will also strengthen the capacity of the Team, assist in generating capacities in Iraq and deliver the mandate in an independent manner, which will, hopefully, support the long-term, sustainable efforts that Iraq is focusing on to achieve accountability.

Throughout the formative period of our work over the past three months, I have consistently underlined the fundamental imperative and the absolute commitment of the Investigative Team to ensuring that its actions are aligned with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations that remain the foundation of this organ, and also that we abide by United Nations policies and best practices, including with respect to the transmission of evidentiary material for use in domestic proceedings. As I have emphasized, our adherence to those principles is not only required by dint of the resolution itself, or indeed by the terms of reference that have been approved by the Council, but is also essential to ensuring the continued support of the international community and the credibility of this work.

It is a remarkable achievement, and both a sign of the unity of the Council on this issue and revealing of the criminality of the many acts carried out by Da'esh, that the Council was unanimous and the international community is in consensus that the rule of law and judicial accountability have an important and critical part to play in properly confronting the phenomena that we have unfortunately witnessed.

In pursuit of the second imperative of fostering collective support for our work in Iraq, the Investigative Team has prioritized the development of cooperative relationships with the Government of Iraq itself, as well as with the multitude of religious and ethnic groups and regional entities in Iraq. We have reached out to non-governmental bodies and other key national stakeholders and, as emphasized in our written report, we consider that that work will be crucial to the successful fulfilment of our mandate.

Reflecting this during my initial mission to Iraq in August, I met with senior Government officials, many survivors, civil society groups and members of Christian, Shia, Sunni, Turkmen Shia, Kakai and Yazidi communities. In those discussions, I emphasized to all, whoever my audience was at any given time, that there is no hierarchy of victims. The Investigative Team, in seeking to fulfil the mandate of the Council, will ensure that we focus on crimes committed against any human being — irrespective of ethnic group or religious denomination — who has suffered from those crimes within our jurisdiction at the hands of Da'esh.

Since our arrival in Iraq in October, the Investigative Team has continued to engage with the Government of Iraq with a view to establishing clear operational frameworks with our national counterparts. In that regard, productive discussions have already been held with the Steering Committee that has been designated under the terms of reference. We are also working on and clarifying the procedures that will form the bedrock of our activities. We have liaised productively and continuously with the relevant national security sectors in Iraq to ensure that the Team can undertake activities in a secure and safe manner.

Last week, I had the singular honour and opportunity to have a meeting with the Prime Minister of Iraq, during which I underlined the commitment of the Investigative Team to working in support of the domestic authorities of Iraq to ensure that members of ISIL are held accountable for their crimes. I was grateful to the Prime Minister that in that meeting, and afterwards in his public statements, he expressed in very solid terms, if I may say so, his continued support for the resolution, the Investigative Team and our focus on genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, which is to be applauded.

Our presence in Iraq has provided the Investigative Team with the opportunity to continue to engage with various survivor groups, tribal leaders and other non-governmental bodies. In that regard, I recently held in-depth discussions with tribal leaders from the Sinjar region and have put in place plans to visit that region later this month, in addition to other key sites of ISIL crimes. Since its arrival in Iraq, the Team has also

continued to build relationships with a broad range of Member States, many of which were initiated here in New York. We look forward to further strengthening those ties in support of our mandated activities over the coming months.

The Investigative Team now looks forward to continuing preparations in Iraq with a view to commencing investigative activities in early 2019. Based on our preparatory activities to date, and reflecting the consultations held with the Government of Iraq and other key national stakeholders, I wish to highlight to the Council the following key priorities for action, which are outlined, of course, in much greater detail in the report.

The first priority is the completion of key infrastructural elements, including the premises of the Investigative Team and the physical and technological equipment that I have referred to, which is necessary for the storage and preservation of evidence.

Secondly, we must finalize the core substantive work, including our standard operating practices and the recruitment process, which we hope to be able to kick off once the budget is approved by the General Assembly.

Thirdly, we must collect, gather and analyse the evidence within Iraq, and by that I mean that the central Government, the regional authorities, third States, non-governmental organizations, international actors and neighbouring States must bring all of that information together so that it can be subjected to analysis, so that patterns can be discerned and so that it can lead to the fourth stage, which relates to the activities of the Investigative Team to fill the gaps that have been identified. I look forward to presenting my next report in May 2019, which will provide a fuller update on those activities.

However, I wish to be candid with the Council in one additional respect. The delivery of this mandate and the successful completion of these activities require not just the historic, united and unanimous support of the Council, but collegiality and solidarity going forward. Without the political will and political support of Member States that have been fortunately evidenced to date, the significant challenges that are obvious on the face of the mandate will not be overcome. By the same token, with that solidarity the challenges and the scale of the evidence will not be insurmountable by the application of our collective will and the resources available in the international community and within the Team.

On a related topic, I take this opportunity to mention that the proposed budget of the Investigative Team has been submitted to the General Assembly for consideration. It is my sincere belief that we have presented a very streamlined organizational structure with a limited objective to meet our mandate. There is no fat in that budget. We have specifically designed a substantive capacity that will allow us to conduct our work in accordance with international standards and thereby ensure the broadest possible use of evidence within Iraq and, domestically, within States elsewhere. That plan, strategy and organizational structure are complemented by a very lightweight mission support mechanism that draws on existing United Nations in-country assets to ensure the maximum focus of resources where it is needed, which is in the substantive work of investigating the crimes themselves. It is my hope that the commitment to efficiency demonstrated in our proposed budget will be reflected on positively by Member States in the coming weeks as it is finalized and approved.

In addition, I would emphasize paragraph 14 of resolution 2379 (2017), which created a trust fund. I request that States also consider making supplementary contributions to the trust fund for key activities. Those activities are not just for the security and the staff costs of the team, but include exhumations, DNA analysis and witness support activities. I take this opportunity to state and underscore my appreciation for the very generous and absolutely vital contributions made thus far by the United Kingdom, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Government of Qatar. I also know that various other States are working towards pledging further support.

In conclusion, I wish to underline to the Council that the preparatory work completed by the Team has reinforced my view that our dual initial imperatives — ensuring independence and seeking cooperation, and demonstrating impartiality and pursuing national engagement — do not present a dichotomy. There is no contradiction in upholding independence while supporting national accountability. Indeed, the opposite is true. It is only by establishing the Investigative Team as an independent, objective and trusted source of evidentiary material capable of conducting its work to the highest possible standards that we can best support the Government of Iraq and

other Member States in our common and necessary pursuit of accountability and justice. Simultaneous, the completion of our investigative activities will be dependent on securing the cooperation, support and trust of all elements of Iraqi society.

It is by harnessing those dual elements, both international and national, that we will be able to successfully fulfil the mandate the Council has provided and deliver justice for the victims of ISIL. As we look forward to the commencement of our investigative activities in Iraq, it is ultimately them and the cause of justice that we seek to serve.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Khan for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): Let me begin by repeating in the Chamber what I said in the consultations room — we offer you and your mission our congratulations, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency. We very much look forward to working with you and supporting you. We also congratulate our Chinese colleagues for the way they conducted the presidency last month.

I would also like to reiterate my condolences here in the Chamber to the United States of America on the death of George H. W. Bush, who I had the honour of meeting in the United Nations some 10 years ago.

Turning to today, I would like to thank the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant for his first briefing to the Council since the Team's deployment on 29 October. I think the Team has made a very good start and we look forward to its future work and briefings.

The Special Adviser said that we really ought to pay tribute to the suffering and the indefatigable courage of the survivors of Da'esh violence. I think that is absolutely right. Justice and accountability for the victims need to be at the centre of our approach, and I want to commend the new Government of Iraq for its commitment to supporting the work of the Investigative Team. We also welcome the continued support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for the Team, and I would like to recognize UNAMI's efforts to facilitate the deployment of the Investigative Team to Baghdad. It is important that all efforts on the ground be complementary and avoid duplication, and we are very pleased that the Team's budget proposal reflects the importance of all efforts complementing each other.

We are encouraged to see the work of the team so far and welcome the fact that there have been contributions from the Government of Iraq, from UNAMI, from allied nations and other United Nations bodies in supporting the Investigative Team.

I think it is crucial that we get these early stages right, including by establishing a mechanism for cooperation between the Investigative Team and the Government of Iraq. That is important for swift and thorough evidence collection, but it will also help ensure that evidence is suitable to be used before the courts. It will, of course, rely on a cooperative and mutually respectful relationship, which we are sure will be present.

The United Kingdom very much agrees with the strategic vision in the guiding principles regarding the Team's immediate priorities. We were pleased to see a very strong focus on engagement with the Government of Iraq. That will obviously be crucial to the success of the Team's work, and we encourage the Steering Committee designated by the Government of Iraq to meet on a regular basis with the Investigative Team, particularly during these early stages of implementation.

The Special Adviser mentioned the importance of voluntary contributions to the trust fund established pursuant to resolution 2379 (2017). I want to echo that sentiment. We think that should also cover voluntary contributions to the Investigative Team in the form of expertise and skills. I would like to pay tribute to Qatar and the Netherlands for their generous contributions. We ourselves have already donated to the trust fund and we remain committed to supporting the Investigative Team as it fulfils its mandate.

Going back to where I started, justice for victims remains at the heart of the resolution. It is vital that the Investigative Team help to secure accountability for the victims of the terrible crimes of Da'esh in order to bring closure to those who still suffer — including women, children and minority communities.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): Let me too reiterate in the open Chamber our congratulations to Côte d'Ivoire on assuming the presidency of the

Council and our thanks and congratulations to China for its excellent presidency in November.

I also congratulate Special Adviser Khan on his appointment. I thank him for being here in person today to brief the Security Council for the first time. The United States looks forward to working closely with him to fulfil the critical mandate of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

Last year, the Government of Iraq asked for assistance in its efforts to hold members of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) accountable for atrocities. Knowing how pivotal a period it was in Iraq's rich history, Council members quickly responded by unanimously adopting resolution 2379 (2017). History has shown that swift and effective evidence collection after atrocities are perpetrated is critical to the ability to recover and move forward. The recent discovery in Iraq of more than 200 mass graves containing as many as 12,000 bodies makes today's discussions in the Council all the more important.

I am pleased to announce today that the United States intends to commit $2 million to support the efforts of the Investigative Team. We thank those who have already contributed, including the United Kingdom, Qatar and the Netherlands, and call on other countries to quickly lend their support as it begins to carry out its mandate. Of course, money alone will not guarantee the effective collection of evidence. We urge Iraq's new Government to continue working closely with the Team as well. Mr. Khan's meeting with Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi of Iraq is an important step in beginning that conversation.

No segment of Iraqi society has escaped the terror of ISIS, and it is important to develop a balanced and accurate account of events. That will give all Iraqis a voice, including members of every religious and ethnic group in Iraq that has been subjected to unspeakable crimes. The appointment of Iraqi experts to the Investigative Team, working alongside international experts, will be critical to its success. At the same time, the Government of Iraq must give the Team the space to operate effectively. Independence and impartiality are essential to its credibility going forward. In keeping with the Secretary-General's efforts to enhance coherence and collaboration across the United Nations system, it will also be essential for the Team to work closely with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and other relevant United Nations offices, as well as civil-society groups, in order to coordinate efforts on the ground. Its efforts must be matched with measures to protect and support the families of victims and the survivors of atrocious crimes, who are still living with trauma from their appalling experiences.

There is much to be optimistic about in Iraq today. We see Iraq's future in people like Nadia Murad, whose foundation, Nadia's Initiative, is dedicated to helping women and children who are victimized by genocide, mass atrocities and human trafficking. Through her efforts, Nadia has helped hundreds of Iraqi women and children heal and rebuild their lives, and has set an example to many Iraqis who are following her lead. She has had an immeasurable impact on the global conversation about ending the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. The United States congratulates her on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2018. Nadia is one of many Iraqis who bravely called on Council members to come together and adopt resolution 2379 (2017) unanimously. Special Adviser Khan's attendance at Nadia's Nobel award ceremony is an important illustration of the new role of the United Nations in seeking justice for Nadia and the many Iraqis like her. We want to once again thank the Government of Iraq and the Investigative Team for taking important steps towards demonstrating that justice is never beyond reach. ISIS will be held accountable for its many crimes against the Iraqi people once and for all.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to join others in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of December, and the Permanent Representative of China on his successful stewardship of the Council last month. We thank Mr. Khan for his first report to the Council (see S/2018/1031) on the work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

Resolution 2379 (2017) stresses the global nature of the threats posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). It is therefore important that Council members form a united front in counteracting that evil. There can be no double standards in that fight, including with regard to seeing justice done. We are firmly of the view that the crimes of ISIL terrorists must not go unpunished, wherever they were committed. However,

it is the Governments of the States affected by those crimes that play the leading role in holding them to account. Resolution 2379 (2017), which represents the basis for the establishment of the Investigative Team, emphasizes in that regard that it must operate with full respect for Iraq's sovereignty and its jurisdiction over crimes committed on Iraqi territory. We hope those provisos will be an indisputable basis for the Investigative Team's operations.

We should point out that the fact that the Team was established at the request of the affected State is a bold kind of innovation for the Security Council with many new aspects. First, as a body it is neither judicial nor prosecutorial, but merely documents evidence. Furthermore, the evidence it collects has to be kept in Iraq and used by the Iraqi judicial system and other national judicial bodies exclusively upon the agreement with Baghdad. Unfortunately, it is very seldom that the views of the States concerned are so carefully taken into account. To take the example of the entity in Syria with similar functions — the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, which was the result of the General Assembly's illegitimate decision — it did not even occur to its so-called architects to talk to Damascus and they utterly disregarded the prerogatives of the Security Council. We want to caution the Investigative Team's leadership against any contact with that illegitimate entity.

We note Mr. Khan's willingness to work constructively to carry out the mandate entrusted to him, which we view first and foremost as in a context of criminal rather than international humanitarian law. We concluded from his report that his mission has support within Iraqi society, and we truly hope that approach will be maintained and welcome all steps in that direction.

We expect the Investigative Team's operations to be conducted impartially, transparently and in full compliance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and that it will make a meaningful contribution to the efforts to bring ISIL terrorists to justice for the crimes they have committed on Iraqi territory. That is important with regard to further counter-terrorism activities in Iraq. ISIL's so-called caliphate has been dealt a crushing blow, partly thanks to the uncompromising war against terrorism that the authorities in Iraq's neighbour Syria have been waging, with Russia's help. Despite that, however, ISIL still remains active in a number of Iraqi provinces and is still carrying out terrorist and asymmetrical attacks there.

For our part, we will continue to assist the Iraqi authorities on the security front both politically and practically, as well as in the work of establishing long-term normalization. We will continue to help strengthen the Iraqi army, including by coordinating on regional security issues through the quadripartite centre in Baghdad, and we intend to broaden our bilateral cooperation on other fronts as well.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we want to see Iraq become a strong, whole, independent and prosperous State where all of its various ethnic and religious groups can live in peace and harmony. We believe that all international assistance, including from the Investigative Team, must be part of the effort to achieve that goal, and the shortest road to that runs through robust national reconciliation processes.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, and your team on assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of December. You can count on my full support and that of my entire delegation. I would also like to thank the Chinese delegation for its professional steering of the work of the Council during the month of November.

I would also like to echo the delegation of the United Kingdom in offering our condolences for the passing of the former President of the United States George H.W. Bush.

I would like to thank Special Adviser Khan for his very informative briefing and welcome him as he addresses the Council for the first time.

Please allow me to focus on three aspects today: first, supporting the work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant; secondly, protecting and supporting survivors and victims; and thirdly, accountability.

First, we welcome the commencement of the work by Mr. Khan and his team and we have looked forward to this discussion and support the priorities as formulated in his first report (S/2018/1031). My Government feels strongly about the need for accountability for atrocity

crimes committed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). These are crimes that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, as mentioned by Mr. Khan in his briefing. We recognize that his investigations are starting in 2019 and that the task that lies ahead of him and the Iraqi Government is a vast one. Its continued support and cooperation are of course paramount, especially in a challenging security context. We expect that the Investigative Team will establish an effective working relationship with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq that is characterized by complementarity.

The Council adopted resolution 2379 (2017) unanimously, which is worth noting. Let me reiterate that Mr. Khan has the continued and full support of the Kingdom of Netherlands to end impunity for atrocity crimes committed by ISIS. That is why my Government announced that it would contribute financially to support the Investigative Team. We call on others that have not yet done so to follow suit.

Secondly, I want to speak about protecting and supporting survivors and victims. A week from today, Nadia Murad will receive her Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo — a recognition of her activism, which has shed light on some of the most terrible crimes imaginable. She has given a voice to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, the Yazidi community and other Iraqi victims.

Mr. Khan has written that survivors and victims should be at the centre of the work of the Investigative Team. We could not agree more and are happy to see our pledge be used for specialized psychological support and assistance to witnesses and victims. As the Investigative Team becomes fully operational in 2019, its ability to build relationships with affected communities — especially women — will be crucial. Inclusive communication with and towards communities is an important aspect of its work.

We count on the Team to secure, collect and preserve evidence in line with international standards; to protect witnesses brave enough to speak up and ensure the broadest use of the evidence collected; to give information to families that are missing loved ones; and, finally, to help demonstrate the extent of the atrocities committed by ISIS and its vile ideology so that it does not create new victims.

Thirdly, I have spoken about the need for accountability for individuals and communities alike. The work of the Investigative Team and the Iraqi Government is crucial to documenting and laying bare the despicable ideology and practice of ISIS and give it its rightful place in history going forward, and to helping to further reduce its appeal across the world. After all, the actions of ISIS in Iraq led to the gravest kind of crimes. In this light, we look forward to Iraq's implementation of international crimes into national legislation. This would be a significant and very positive development. In order to achieve justice and eventually reconciliation, it is our understanding that evidence gathered by the Investigative Team should be used only in prosecutions that comply with the highest international legal standards, and that no capital punishment will be applied.

In closing, I want to wish Special Adviser Khan and his team the best of luck with the valuable and substantial tasks that lie ahead of them.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your presidency of the Security Council for this month and wishing you every success. At the same time, we thank the Chinese delegation for its presidency of the Council for last month.

I join previous speakers in expressing my deepest condolences to the United States Administration and the American people following the passing of former President George H.W. Bush who served as the permanent representative of his country to the United Nations and presided over the Security Council in May 1972. Our condolences also go to his family. President George H.W. Bush holds a special place in the Administration, the leadership and the hearts of the people of Kuwait, thanks to the leading and historical role he played in mobilizing political and military support for the formation of the great international coalition, led by the United States of America. That contributed to liberating the State of Kuwait from the 1991 occupation, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the embodiment of the concept of collective security. The principled and courageous attitudes by the President George H.W. Bush and his support for justice and rights will not be forgotten by the people of Kuwait, and will remain entrenched in their memory.

I would like to thank Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for

Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant for his valuable briefing on the important issue before us today. We also welcome his first report (S/2018/1031) as a road map for the Investigative Team. We wish Mr. Khan and his team every success in carrying out the difficult and sensitive task ahead. We hope that the Investigative Team will be able to discharge its mission to ensure that the perpetrators of the most atrocious crimes against the brotherly Iraqi people are held accountable. That would represent a fundamental part of the comprehensive systematic approach to eliminating terrorism.

Resolution 2379 (2017) established a mechanism that represented a victory for humanitarian justice and for reparation to victims. That mechanism was formed in response to the Iraqi Government's request to guarantee that the perpetrators of the most heinous crimes — which could constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide — would not enjoy impunity, while fully respecting the sovereignty of Iraq and its jurisdiction over crimes committed on its territories. We believe that the mechanism is an important deterrent to terrorists. We are hopeful that the priorities identified by the Investigative Team in its first report, as well as the commitments undertaken by the Iraqi Government to support and facilitate the mission of the Investigative Team, will bring the perpetrators to justice under Iraqi law.

In that respect, we greatly appreciate the sacrifices and the heroic actions undertaken by the brotherly Iraqi people. Allow me therefore to congratulate the daughter of Iraq, Ms. Nadia Murad, on winning the Nobel Peace Prize and wish her every success. Her humanitarian message encompasses a true sense of heroism and serves to heal the wounds caused by the so-called Da'esh terrorist organization in Iraq. It is indeed a source of hope and optimism.

Kuwait has stood alongside Iraq throughout the difficult circumstances it has endured, including within the framework of the international coalition against Da'esh. We have provided logistical support and hosted a number of international coalition meetings. Aware of the serious challenges that brotherly Iraq is facing after defeating the so-called Da'esh, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of Kuwait, took the initiative in calling for the convening in Kuwait the International Kuwait Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq in February, which was co-chaired by Iraq, the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank. The Conference raised $30 billion, which was donated by participating countries as well as representatives of the private sector and civil society organizations. Those contributions took the form of development loans, subsidized loans and investments. They will help to improve living conditions, develop infrastructure, provide basic services and create a safe environment in the areas freed from the terrorists in Iraq.

In conclusion, it is high time for Iraq to recover following the tragic events it has experienced in recent years while fighting against Da'esh. Once again, Kuwait expresses its solidarity with the Government and the people of Iraq in any measures they undertake to roll back terrorism, prevent the expansion of terrorist activities and prosecute the perpetrators of those atrocious crimes by bringing them to justice. We will support such measures in order to consolidate Iraqi national unity and preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, my delegation would like to congratulate the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of December and to assure you, Mr. President, of our support. I would also like to express our great appreciation to the delegation of China for its able, constructive and productive presidency in November.

My delegation thanks the United Kingdom for calling for this meeting to re-confirm the readiness of the members of the Security to fight terrorism and support the people and the Government of Iraq. We believe such efforts will move Iraqis along the path to peace, stability and unity. I also welcome Special Adviser Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, appointed on 13 July as Head of the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), established by resolution 2379 (2017) to collect, preserve and ensure the storage of evidence from that terrorist group in Iraq. I thank him for his most informative briefing.

We believe that resolution 2379 (2017), adopted unanimously in September last year, was a testament to the full support of the international community to combat the common evil of terrorism, which threatens the entire world. The resolution, which requested the establishment of an investigative team to bring ISIL (Da'esh) to justice, was an important milestone in

ensuring the prosecution of that terrorist group for all the atrocities it committed in and outside Iraq. We are convinced that those criminals are equally guilty for also destroying cultural heritage sites. Our delegation has high hopes for Special Adviser Khan and his team.

We welcome the intensive preparatory work conducted by the Investigative Team in such a short period, and support its vision for investigating and gathering of evidence of crimes committed by ISIL. That should include cooperation with all organizations, agencies of the United Nations, the private sector, academia, media and non-governmental agencies. It is important that the documentary evidence be preserved in accordance with international standards. We will also need outreach research activities from relevant non-governmental and civic organizations, including groups of victims, as our partners, to ensure the Investigative Team's credibility and effective operations.

We note the importance of ensuring adequate protection and support for the victims of ISIL in order for their voices to be heard and become a decisive factor for investigative activities and future courts. In that regard, we welcome the intention to create a specialized group for the protection of victims and witnesses, which will be responsible for providing advice and assistance to the investigative team to ensure maximum protection for witnesses and victims.

We note with satisfaction the holding, on 17 October 2018 in the framework of the Committee pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), of a briefing by Mr. Khan on the implementation of resolution 2379 (2017). According to its mandate, the Investigative Team can interact with all structures of the United Nations and subsidiary bodies connected with suppressing ISIL activities and investigating its crimes. In that regard, we welcome the support expressed by the members of the 1267 Committee for the provision of comprehensive assistance to the work of the Investigative Team under the leadership of the Special Adviser. Kazakhstan firmly believes that solving the complex problem of international terrorism would entail greater coordination and a holistic, systemic and innovative approach by the entire international community, represented by Member States and international organizations.

Kazakhstan, which deeply believes in human dignity, justice and freedom, joins other Member States in upholding and fully implementing resolution 2379 (2017), in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We are sure that the elimination of socioeconomic factors that give rise to terrorism will prevent the return of chaos, suffering and irreparable loss for the civilian population and give them new hope for a better future. In conclusion, I would like to reassure the Council of Kazakhstan's commitment to combat international terrorism, including by implementing relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly resolution 2379 (2017).

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to join other delegations in expressing our sincerest condolences on the passing away of a great statesman, on both the national and international stage, former United States President George Herbert Walker Bush. We convey our sympathy to his family and to the American people for this loss.

Let me also express our sincere congratulations to Côte d'Ivoire on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We wish it every success. We also pay tribute to China for its excellent presidency during the month of November.

First of all, we would like to express our sincere congratulations to the Secretariat and Special Adviser Karim Asad Ahmad Khan and his team for their great efforts since the Council adopted resolution 2379 (2017), on 21 September 2017, which required the Secretary-General to appoint an investigative team to support the efforts of the Iraqi Government to establish responsibility for the crimes committed in Iraq by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh). Our delegation is very pleased that, following a very complicated, arduous and difficult process, Mr. Khan has presented us with the first report on his work (see S/2018/1031), following his appointment on 13 July.

The report of the Investigative Team, which we consider preliminary given the recent start of the Team's activities and the complexity of the work it must carry out, basically illustrates the details of the strategic vision for the activities that the Investigative Team will carry out as an independent and impartial mechanism pursuant to resolution 2379 (2017). There is no doubt as to the great and eager expectations for future reports to be presented to the Council on the crimes of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, given the monumental and terrifying details that have been emerging about crimes committed by Da'esh during the period between June 2014 and December 2017, during

which Da'esh occupied, controlled and operated with impunity in large areas of Iraq, committing all kinds of crimes that involve serious violations of international law, human rights law, international criminal law and international humanitarian law, and which constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Several witness accounts confirm that during its occupation Da'esh carried out serious crimes against the civilian population in the territories under its control. More than 200 mass graves have been discovered that hold the remains of many thousands of men, women and children — atrocious loss of human life, with the attendant terrible, horrendous suffering.

In view of the devastating magnitude of those crimes, which are being discovered and will continue to be in future, and with the aim of clearly establishing responsibility so as to ensure proper accountability for those responsible for such acts, it is necessary that the international community and the United Nations provide the Investigative Team all the necessary support, including basic infrastructure, funding, logistical means, other resources and, even more important, as Mr. Khan states in his report, solidarity and unanimous support from the Council, its members and the States Members of the United Nations. That support should include clear political will so that that the Team can successfully carry out its work and eventually expose to the light of day all of the crimes that have been committed, including identifying the perpetrators. That work — which should always be carried out while observing impartiality and independence, offering collective support to Iraq and adhering to optimal international standards and practices, with focus on those with greater responsibility in the commission of the crimes and in close collaboration with other international agencies in the region with competence on the issues — will allow the international community not only to know the magnitude of the crimes and their perpetrators and ensure accountability, but will inevitably awaken awareness of the need to stop and prevent the repetition of such acts in other armed conflict settings.

In conclusion, our delegation wishes great courage, determination and success to Mr. Khan and his entire team in the formidable and complex mission that has been entrusted to them by the United Nations. At the same time, we assure him of the support of the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in his duties.

Mrs. Gasri (France) (*spoke in French*): We would like to join others in wishing Côte d'Ivoire every success during its presidency of the Security Council for the month of December, and we congratulate China on its presidency in November.

I also wish to reiterate the condolences offered by President Emmanuel Macron to the American people following the death of former President Bush.

We would like to congratulate Mr. Karim Khan, Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2379 (2017), on his appointment and progress report (see S/2018/1031). We hope to see him appear regularly before the Security Council to report on the progress of the work of the Investigative Team.

The international community, including France, has stood alongside the Iraqi authorities in the fight against terrorism. We are now also standing with them in their reconstruction and reconciliation efforts, without which there can be no lasting peace in Iraq. A few days ago, President Macron made a pledge to the fund launched by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nadia Murad, who embodies hope for the Iraqi people and for all the victims of Da'esh regardless of their ethnicity, religion or gender. France's contribution to the fund will go towards the reconstruction of Sinjar, a region particularly scarred by the abuses of Da'esh, as pointed out by Mr. Khan earlier.

Furthermore, in 2019 France will host the next follow-up conference of the Paris action plan in support of victims of ethnic and religious violence in the Middle East. The plan includes an important component on the fight against impunity in terms of technical assistance, training personnel and identifying victims and providing them psychological support. A fund for victims of ethnic and religious violence was also set up. We believe that the operationalization of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant will fully contribute to that goal.

Solid foundations have been put in place over the past three months for the Investigative Team to fulfil the mandate set by the Security Council in resolution 2379 (2017) and its terms of reference, in keeping with United Nations policies and best practices. In that regard, we take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/73/253) that outlines the policy of non-sharing by international accountability mechanisms of evidence

for use in the context of criminal proceedings in which the death penalty could be imposed or carried out. Three points seem essential to support the Special Adviser and his Investigative Team.

The first point is that the Investigative Team must have the resources it needs, starting with financial resources. That has been said several times before me. We also call on the Special Adviser to ensure that staff members are recruited in such a way as to ensure diversity in terms of gender, language and legal tradition.

The second element is cooperation — first with Iraq. We welcome the commitment of the newly elected Iraqi Government and the establishment of a steering committee to set the terms for that cooperation. We also note the concern of the Investigative Team with respect to involving all the relevant actors in Iraq, including non-governmental organizations, religious minorities and victims' representatives. Cooperation with United Nations mechanisms is also important. We particularly welcome cooperation with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, which has a broad mandate to protect human rights and support the rule of law. The cooperation of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, and its Team of Experts is also essential, as recalled earlier by the representative of Kazakhstan.

The third aspect is support for justice. The Investigative Team must collect and store evidence that could be used in fair and equitable court proceedings, first in Iraq. We support the efforts of the Iraqi authorities to strengthen the judicial and governance systems. In addition, the victims of Da'esh must have access to justice everywhere. That is something the Investigative Team should also monitor.

Finally, France will continue to support national reconciliation and the fight against impunity, which are inextricably linked. The Investigative Team is an important tool that is complementary to the measures undertaken by the Iraqi authorities to ensure that all the most serious crimes committed in Iraq are brought before the courts, whoever the perpetrators and victims may be. Iraq was able to defeat Da'esh militarily, to hold parliamentary elections in good conditions and to proceed with the appointment of new authorities. It is now important to work towards the implementation of inclusive governance that is based on the rule of law and that serves the interests of all segments of Iraqi society, in stability and prosperity, with the support of the international community.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): At the outset, let me join other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. You can count on our support. Let me also thank the Chinese delegation for its very able stewardship of the work of this body during the month of November.

Allow me also to offer my most sincerest condolences to the American people on the passing of former President Bush, who played quite an important role in assisting the peaceful and democratic transition in Poland and in our part of Europe starting in 1989.

Let me also thank Mr. Khan and his team for the report (see S/2018/1031) and the very informative briefing. His work, which consists in the collection, preservation and storage of evidence, remains crucial to achieving accountability and to providing justice for the victims of the crimes committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Allow me also to commend the Iraqi authorities for their cooperation with Mr. Khan's team.

As Mr. Khan rightly pointed out, resolution 2379 (2017) is of crucial importance. By that resolution the Security Council recognized, in a united way, the importance of judicial accountability to the maintenance of international peace and security. In that context, for the record, let me stress that we cannot agree with the view expressed in the Chamber by one delegation that the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, is illegal. There is no basis to question the legality of that body, which was established by General Assembly resolution 71/248. That claim also runs counter to the spirit of resolution 2379 (2017), concerning the importance of accountability.

Poland welcomes the commencement of the Investigative Team's preparatory activities, the development of a strategic vision and guiding principles for the Team's activities, as well as the implementation of the financial, logistical and administrative

measures necessary to facilitate the commencement of its substantive work. We look forward to the Team's achievement of its full operational capabilities. We encourage all United Nations agencies to collaborate closely with the Team and provide it with all necessary assistance in fulfilling its mandate. As Mr. Khan stressed, he and his Team need solidarity and support. Let me assure him of Poland's full solidarity and support for his extremely important work.

We strongly believe that in order to advance national reconciliation and restore stability in Iraq, it is vital to deliver justice to the victims of atrocities committed by terrorist groups by holding the perpetrators of those crimes accountable. Accomplishing this goal will require, inter alia, carrying out thorough investigations, evidential material collection and analysis. It should be done in accordance with the highest international standards and in close cooperation and communication with the Iraqi authorities to ensure the broadest possible usability and admissibility of such evidence and materials before national courts and by national investigative and prosecutorial authorities.

We welcome the planned inclusion of Iraqi personnel in the Team, who will work on an equal footing with international staff members. We are convinced that their participation will not only increase the effectiveness of the Team's work and its capacity to deliver on its mandate, but will also enhance support for its activities among the Iraqi population. We hope that it will also help to maximize the potential use of its evidentiary material in credible, impartial and independent domestic criminal proceedings conducted by competent domestic courts in Iraq and in third States, as well as enhance existing accountability processes, commence new fair proceedings and contribute to reconciliation and stabilization. We highly appreciate the recognition of the need to ensure geographic diversity and gender, ethnic and religious balance in appointing the Iraqi members of the Investigative Team, which will reflect the diversity of the Iraqi population and increase the Team's capabilities in collecting evidence in various communities affected by Da'esh.

The provision of protection and support for the victims should be paramount. Therefore, we commend the intent to establish the victim and witness protection unit with the aim of facilitating the delivery of appropriate support.

With regard to the efforts to provide accountability for the crimes committed by terrorist groups, we encourage the Iraqi authorities and the Investigative Team to pay special attention to sexual and gender-based crimes in prosecutions of Da'esh fighters, as already highlighted by other delegations. Particular emphasis should also be placed on investigating all violations and abuses committed against children. In addition, it is, in our view, indispensable to avoid the penalization of women and children who are of Da'esh families and who have no link to the organization.

In conclusion, let me reiterate once again Poland's support for the Investigative Team and call for cooperation with the Special Adviser and the Team in fulfilling its important mandate. Allow me to stress the importance of carrying it out in accordance with United Nations best practices and policies, including on sharing evidence for use in criminal proceedings in which capital punishment could be imposed or carried out, as well as relevant international law, including international human rights law, rules and standards, notably those relevant to fair trial and due process. Let me finally once more acknowledge the commitment of the Special Adviser to achieving the full operational capabilities of the Investigative Team and ensuring full compliance with the Team's mandate, in accordance with resolution 2379 (2017), and wish him and the Team the best of success in fulfilling their important tasks.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): Let me too congratulate you, Mr. President, and your delegation on assuming the presidency and assure you, Sir, of our full support during the month of December. Let me also take this opportunity to thank China for an impeccably run presidency in November.

I would like to thank Special Adviser Khan for his informative briefing. No doubt, he has a very challenging set of tasks ahead, but he can certainly count on Sweden's continued full support in his endeavour.

I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Nadia Murad on having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to end sexual violence in conflict. This is an important recognition on behalf of all the victims of Da'esh, giving impetus to the efforts of holding those responsible to account.

Advancing accountability for the violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and human rights law in the conflicts on the Council's agenda has proven extremely difficult. The unanimous support

for the decision to establish the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant is therefore particularly significant and a major achievement. We now need to stay united in actively supporting the implementation of this important mandate.

In this regard, we welcome the strategic vision and priorities set out by the Special Adviser today, in particular the victims-based approach, putting at the centre those most impacted by the crimes. The many examples in reports of the Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Patten remind us again and again why this victims-based approach is so important. In this context, we also underline that children with perceived or actual association with Da'esh are — first and foremost — victims and must be treated as such. Collective support for and trust in the mechanism on the part of those affected will be crucial. The establishment of a specialized victim and witness protection unit is therefore important.

It is crucial to ensure that the Team is adequately equipped with the expertise and resources needed. The Team must be able to effectively gather evidence for the crimes that have been committed against men, women and children, including sexual and gender-based violence. We are pleased that the Team foresees close cooperation with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The operational and security environment in Iraq is very complex. We agree with Mr. Khan's conclusion that innovative logistical and operational solutions will be necessary. Strong Iraqi support and buy-in will be decisive to the success of the Team's work. Mr. Khan's recent meeting with Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi was a positive step in this regard. We welcome regular interaction and coordination between Mr. Khan's team and the Steering Committee designated by the Iraqi Government. As an independent and impartial institution, the Team can also play a key role in supporting the Iraqi Government in building capacity in the legal sector. The cooperation between the Team and the Iraqi Government can be mutually reinforcing.

We welcome the Team's intention to achieve geographical diversity, as well as gender, ethnic and religious balance, among its Iraqi members. The Team's development of trusting relationships with religious and ethnic minority groups, non-governmental organizations and other national stakeholders will be central. The support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the wider United Nations system is also important.

Accountability for all atrocity crimes committed in Iraq is crucial. The quest for accountability will contribute to reconciliation and long-term peace. In this regard, the rule of law and the Iraqi legal system must be strengthened, both in the long term and with respect to legal processes against suspected Da'esh members currently being pursued by Iraqi courts. We encourage Iraqi authorities to put in place national legislation that ensures that perpetrators of international crimes are tried in Iraq, in full accordance with the principles of rule of law and due process. United Nations support will be vital in that regard, and we remain strongly opposed to the death penalty. In accordance with United Nations policies and best practices, evidence gathered by the Investigative Team will not be used in trials that may lead to capital punishment. That issue must continue to be closely followed.

Sweden was among the first countries to prosecute suspected perpetrators of alleged war crimes in Iraq, as well as in Syria. We look forward to the Team's support for universal jurisdiction, including the exchange of information and potential support for the prosecution of Da'esh crimes in other national jurisdictions through mutual legal assistance.

In conclusion, promoting accountability for crimes committed by Da'esh is a matter of urgency. It requires political courage, as well as continued, united international support. Iraq can rely on Sweden as a committed partner in that moving forward.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China congratulates Côte d'Ivoire on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We will offer you all our support, Sir. We appreciate the support of all relevant parties during China's presidency of the Council.

China extends its condolences on the passing of former United States President George H.W. Bush and presents its sympathy to his family members.

Iraq is currently at a critical stage of national peace, stability and reconstruction. An inclusive political solution is the only way to achieve lasting peace and

security in Iraq. China hopes that the new Government of Iraq will make further progress in promoting economic development, improving standards of living and accelerating the reconstruction process.

The activities carried out by terrorists in Iraq claimed massive civilian casualties and posed a severe threat to peace and security in Iraq and to regional and international peace and security. China commends the Government and the people of Iraq for their tireless efforts to counter terrorism, and supports Iraq's efforts to bring terrorists to justice, in accordance with relevant domestic laws.

China takes note of the first report of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (see S/2018/1031), and commends the Team's work. China supports the Investigative Team in its efforts to protect the victims of terrorism and cooperate with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and other mechanisms so as to avoid the duplication of functions. It is our hope that the Investigative Team will act consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and in strict compliance with resolution 2379 (2017) and the terms of reference in fulfilling its mandate. We also hope that the Investigative Team, in consultation with the Government of Iraq and all relevant parties, will develop a detailed implementation strategy and complete its initial deployment at an early date, prioritizing the collection and analysis of existing evidence and conducting targeted, field-based investigations.

As noted in the report, the ability of the Investigative Team to address challenges effectively will depend on its ability to maintain the trust and support of the people of Iraq. The Investigative Team should fully respect Iraq's sovereignty and jurisdiction over crimes committed in its territory, thereby playing a positive role in enhancing the capacities of the Iraqi Government to hold terrorist groups accountable for their crimes.

The situation of international counter-terrorism efforts remains serious as terrorist forces use diverse means to conduct terrorist activities and spread extremist ideas. The international community should enhance its cooperation, unify its standards and adopt concrete measures to resolutely fight all terrorist groups designated by the Security Council. China stands ready to continue to work with the international community to make further progress in international counter-terrorism cooperation.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to offer our warmest wishes for success to you, Sir, and your team as you assume the presidency of the Security Council. You can depend on our full support.

I also thank and commend the delegation of China for its conduct of the presidency last month with utmost probity and professionalism.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru has said in an official communiqué, we offer our deepest condolences over the passing of former United States President George H.W. Bush.

We appreciate the convening of this meeting and the important briefing delivered by Mr. Karim Khan. We welcome his appointment and express our support for the vision, priorities and initial actions of his management.

Peru, a sponsor of resolution 2379 (2017), by which the Council established the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, considers it essential to support Iraq in its efforts with a view to guaranteeing access to justice and contributing to reconciliation in that country. We stress the importance of the Investigation Team being recognized as an impartial and independent actor, and that its action be guided by the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international human rights law.

We also stress the need to make available to the Investigation Team the resources necessary for, among other aspects related to the fulfilment of its mandate, the physical and technological infrastructure required to preserve the evidence it has been collecting. In that connection, we stress the Special Adviser's intention to establish a specialized unit for the protection of victims and witnesses, which we consider to be essential for the fulfilment of his mandate.

We consider it important that the Investigative Team, the Iraqi authorities and civil society maintain fluid cooperation, in line with the terms of reference approved by the Council and with an eventual headquarters agreement, and that they continue to be assisted by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. Moreover, we consider it necessary for the work of the Investigative Team to be consistent with

the various entities of the United Nations system, including the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, as well as with the Counter-Terrorism Committee. We highlight the support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, which last October facilitated the deployment of the Investigative Team in Baghdad.

We must remember that, despite the evident progress in the fight against Da'esh, the threat it represents is still latent in new modalities. The work of the Investigative Team in promoting the rule of law and the fight against impunity is essential in order to confront that threat more effectively. In this regard, in addition to highlighting the progress made in the current phase of gathering evidence, we note the desirability of the Council's promoting the cooperation required so that the competent authorities of other countries and supranational bodies can also enjoy access to them in order to guarantee access to justice.

Mr. Gebru (Ethiopia): Let me join other members of the Security Council in congratulating Côte d'Ivoire on its assumption of the presidency of the Council this month, and we assure you, Sir, of Ethiopia's support and cooperation. We also congratulate China on the successful completion of its work during its presidency for the month of November.

We extend our sincere condolences to the United States of America on the passing of former President George H.W. Bush.

We thank Special Adviser Khan for his first briefing on Da'esh accountability in Iraq. It was under Ethiopia's presidency that resolution 2379 (2017) was adopted, with a view to ensuring the accountability of members of Da'esh for their crimes in Iraq, including cases that may amount to crimes against humanity. The adoption of the resolution was an appropriate response to the request made by the Government of Iraq calling for the assistance of the international community in ensuring the accountability of members of Da'esh for the crimes they committed.

Through its commission of acts involving murder, kidnapping, hostage-taking, suicide bombings and the destruction of cultural heritage, Da'esh has committed very serious crimes that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide. We will never forget the loss of our compatriots who were mercilessly massacred by Da'esh in Libya, and that is one of the reasons that we supported the adoption of resolution 2379 (2017): to hold members of Da'esh accountable for the crimes committed in Iraq.

In that regard, we support the establishment of the Investigative Team, headed by a Special Adviser, to support Iraq's efforts by collecting and preserving evidence of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed by Da'esh. We believe that that should be done with full respect for the sovereignty of Iraq and its jurisdiction over crimes committed on its territory.

We note that the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh formally began its work and submitted its first report (see S/2018/1031) on the basis of resolution 2379 (2017). We also note that the Special Adviser briefed the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. Furthermore, we note his visit to Iraq and the series of engagements with senior officials from the executive, legislative and judicial branches of Government at various levels, as well as with survivors, civil society groups and members of different communities.

In the light of the severity of the crimes committed by Da'esh and the magnitude of the challenge the country faces, Iraq will need appropriate technical support and capacity-building. It is important that Member States, as well as regional and international organizations, provide appropriate legal assistance and capacity-building to the Government of Iraq in order to strengthen its courts and judicial system. Let me conclude by expressing our full support for the efforts aimed at ensuring the accountability of Da'esh members for all of the crimes they have committed, not only in Iraq but also in other parts of the world.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to join other delegations that have spoken before me in congratulating you, Mr. President, and the entire delegation of Côte d'Ivoire on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also wish to take this opportunity to commend the delegation of China for efficiently steering the work of the Council during the month of November. We are grateful for

the report introduced by the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (S/2018/1031), Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, to whom we express our full support in the fulfilment of his mandate.

My delegation wishes to highlight the report submitted by the Special Adviser on the progress made in coordinating and establishing the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, with a view to fulfilling and implementing the mandate established under resolution 2379 (2017). We encourage continuing to work together with all of the institutions that form the United Nations system, and especially continuing to develop ties and good relations with the Government and the people of Iraq.

Today Iraq has a new democratically elected Government that must now confront the challenges associated with the transition from a post-conflict situation, which includes rebuilding practically the entire country and, in particular, ensuring reconciliation and judicial accountability. Nonetheless, Iraq continues to face the threat posed by Da'esh, given that, despite the defeat of that terrorist organization in large parts of the country, it is still capable of perpetrating asymmetrical attacks against the civilian population and its infrastructure, as well as against the forces of law and order. That has been proven by the attacks reported by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq against the populations in Baghdad, Ninawa and Kirkuk, among others.

Furthermore, the discovery of more than 200 mass graves that could contain the remains of more than 12,000 victims of Da'esh — mainly women, children, people with disabilities and members of the Iraqi forces — highlights the brutality and criminality of that terrorist organization and the urgent need to identify the perpetrators of those crimes so that they can be held accountable for their actions. In that regard, and taking into account the seriousness of the crimes against humanity committed by Da'esh, we encourage the Investigative Team to cooperate with and assist the Government of Iraq in preserving the integrity of those mass graves, with the objective of collecting and preserving as much evidence as possible in order to help carry out the investigations and corresponding judicial processes that will guarantee that those violations do not go unpunished, as well as to identify the victims and return their bodies to their families.

To that end, it is important that the Investigative Team strengthen capacity-building in order to set up genetic databases that will allow for the exhumation and identification of the bodies of victims, which will strengthen their investigative work. The development and implementation of measures on the management and stewardship of all of the evidence collected, as well as the provision of protection and assistance to survivors and witnesses, must comply with the highest international standards.

It is also essential that the Investigative Team develop synergies and work closely not only with the different offices and agencies of the United Nations system, but also with the various subsidiary bodies of the Council, such as the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities; and the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

We reiterate that the work of the Investigative Team in fulfilling its mandate should be carried out while observing and respecting the sovereignty of Iraq and maintaining its impartiality, independence and credibility, so that the investigations supported by the evidence obtained by the Team are able to meet the highest criteria of justice.

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that policies of regime change, interventionism and interference in the internal affairs of States have been some of the main causes of Government vacuums and have contributed to the weakening of the forces of law and order, thereby facilitating the emergence of terrorism and extremism in the region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

I would like to express my condolences and extend those of Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire — who will be sitting here in the Chamber tomorrow for the high-level debate — on behalf of the Ivorian Government and its people, on the death of George Herbert Walker Bush, the forty-first President of the United States of America, who was one of the most eminent members of the Security Council.

My delegation is grateful to Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan for the introduction of his report (see S/2018/1031). The report provides information on the arrangements that the Investigative Team intends to put in place for the effective implementation of resolution 2379 (2017), of 21 September 2017. As this is the first report submitted by Mr. Khan to the Council, Côte d'Ivoire would like to take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate him on his appointment to that post and wish him every success in carrying out the duties entrusted to him by the Secretary-General.

The recent discovery of 202 mass graves with more than 12,000 bodies in the northern and western provinces of Iraq, previously under the control of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, testifies to the cruelty of that terrorist group and calls on our Council to consider the urgent need to operationalize the Investigation Team. To that end, my country calls on all Member States to show unfailing solidarity with the Team so that it can effectively carry out its mission.

Despite the recent military setbacks in Iraq, Da'esh continues to pose a serious threat to the country's stability and to international peace and security, with more than 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters from approximately 100 countries, its new modus operandi through the diversification of its financial resources, the use of social media and the manipulation of local tribes. Hence the urgent need to mobilize all efforts to put an end to the activities of that terrorist group as soon as possible, particularly through the implementation of the relevant Council resolutions.

Côte d'Ivoire would like to commend the efforts made by the United Nations and the international community to strengthen the means of combating terrorism, which undermines the development efforts of many States and affects the lives of thousands of individuals. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the reforms undertaken to restructure and improve the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture, in particular through the establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the adoption of resolution 2354 (2017), on the document entitled "Comprehensive International Framework to Counter Terrorist Narratives" (S/2017/375), together with guiding principles and good practices to effectively combat the means used by Da'esh and Al-Qaida to spread terrorism throughout the world. My delegation would note the Council's responsibility in that regard and the need for regional and international cooperation in the fight against Da'esh and its associated groups. Côte d'Ivoire is determined, for its part, to work with all bilateral and multilateral partners to eradicate that scourge.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire would like to pay tribute once again to the courage of the Iraqi security and defence forces, which defeated Da'esh in 2017, and congratulate the Iraqi authorities on the successful holding of parliamentary elections on 12 May, which resulted in the appointment of Mr. Barham Salih and Mr. Adil Abdul-Mahdi, President of the Republic and Prime Minister, respectively. In my country's view, those actions will enable Iraq to regain lasting peace and stability in order to contribute to spreading peace in the region and to better utilize its immense wealth.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like, at the outset, to congratulate the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to wish it every success. We also thank the People's Republic of China for the wise manner in which it presided over the Council last month.

My delegation would like to express its deepest condolences to the United States delegation in New York, the United States Administration and the American people on the passing away of former President George Herbert Walker Bush.

We also thank Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, for his valuable briefing. We commend his personal commitment to carry out his work with care and determination under difficult circumstances, as well as his tireless efforts to fulfil his mandate pursuant to resolution 2379 (2017) and the terms of reference according to the highest international standards.

We welcome the first report (see S/2018/1031) of the Special Adviser on collecting, preserving and storing evidence of crimes committed by terrorist group Da'esh, in order to promote accountability and justice. The international community is keen to provide assistance to the Republic of Iraq in the post-Da'esh phase and following the victories it achieved against Da'esh, as evidenced by the unified international efforts to adopt

an international resolution to condemn and document evidence of the crimes perpetrated by Da'esh in Iraq. In that regard, we commend the efforts of the United Kingdom and other co-sponsors, in cooperation with the Government of Iraq, in sponsoring the resolution. Those efforts bore fruit, as evidenced in the adoption of resolution 2379 (2017), which includes a request to collect evidence of all acts committed by the Da'esh terrorist organization in Iraq that amount to crimes against humanity, genocide or war crimes.

Paragraph 2 of the resolution called for establishing an international Investigative Team headed by a Special Adviser of the Secretary-General to carry out the functions of collecting, preserving and storing evidence of the crimes of Da'esh and submitting same to national Iraqi courts. That is in line with the content of the resolution, which reaffirms full respect for the for the sovereignty and legal and judicial jurisdiction of Iraq. My country hopes that the Investigative Team will achieve the desired results. We underscore that the Government of Iraq has taken the necessary actions and measures as swiftly as possible to facilitate the establishment of the International Investigative Team.

We call on the international community and the States Members of the United Nations to join efforts to confront and contain the phenomenon of international terrorism, which threatens international peace and security, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations on the need for international cooperation to combat threats to international peace and security. The working mechanism of the Investigative Team, pursuant to the resolution and the terms of reference, is based on full respect for Iraq's judicial jurisdiction, and the resolution has set out a number of approaches to achieve its objectives.

First, the Team shall collect, preserve and store evidence of crimes committed by Da'esh in Iraq in order to submit them to national Iraqi courts. It shall ensure the broadest possible use of that evidence and enable investigations by the competent Iraqi authorities on crimes perpetrated by Da'esh. That evidence will eventually be used in fair and independent criminal proceedings conducted by the competent Iraqi courts. The competent Iraqi authorities should be the primary intended recipients of that evidence, as specified in the terms of reference, and any other use of that evidence shall be determined in agreement with the Government of Iraq, on a case-by-case basis.

In that regard, when it comes to the death penalty, my Government believes that it is premature to talk about that matter, especially as the Security Council decided to review the mandate of the Special Adviser and the Team after a period of two years. We reaffirm that Iraq will exercise its sovereign right, pursuant to article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We reiterate what we said before the Council on 13 November (see S/PV.8396) with regard to judicial proceedings for terrorist crimes. They will be carried out in accordance with the law and we will take into consideration the right of the accused to defend and appeal at all stages of the proceedings.

Secondly, resolution 2379 (2017) also underlines that Member States on whose territory Da'esh has committed acts that may amount to war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity may ask the Investigative Team to collect evidence of such acts, but only with the approval of the Security Council. The Secretary-General may also establish separate terms of reference with regard to the work of the Team in that State.

Thirdly, the resolution reaffirms that the Investigative Team will ensure that Iraqi experts benefit from its expertise and will make every possible effort to share knowledge with and assist the Government of Iraq.

Fourthly, the Government of Iraq reaffirms the impartiality and independence of the Investigative Team pursuant to resolution 2379 (2017) and the terms of reference that constitute the framework within which the Team will operate, pursuant to the relevant provisions of international law and the best practices of the United Nations in that regard.

Fifthly, in order to ensure that the Government of Iraq will address the outcomes and results of the resolution in an optimal manner, we reaffirm the need for Member States and regional and international organizations to provide appropriate legal assistance and capacity-building in order to strengthen the courts and judicial system of Iraq, pursuant to resolution 2379 (2017).

Sixthly, Iraq calls on Member States and regional and international organizations to provide their full support to the Investigative Team — including financial support, services and equipment — in order to enable the Team to carry out its work. In that regard, we commend the contributions of the United Kingdom,

the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the State of Qatar, as well as the contribution announced today by the United States, to endow the Team trust fund. We call on Member States to support the Team so that it can carry out its mandate and achieve the political objective for which it was established.

In conclusion, we hope that the Investigative Team will work within the approaches and the terms of reference contained in the resolution, while fully respecting the sovereignty and judicial system of Iraq. We call once again on Member States to swiftly meet the financial requirements cited by the Head of the Team in his report to the Fifth Committee so that the Team can fulfil its mandate within the period established by the resolution. We wish the Head of the Team and its members every success.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.